

VZCZCXRO6263
RR RUEHDBU RUEHPW RUEHSL
DE RUEHBUL #1680/01 1790407
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 280407Z JUN 09 ZDS
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9738
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001680

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SUBJECT: Elections Snapshot from Northeastern Afghanistan

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Electioneering in Badakhshan Leads to Criticism

¶1. Controversy ensued in Badakhshan when Zalmay Mojaddedi, a Member of Parliament (MP) close to Karzai, used two GIROA helicopters to personally distribute emergency assistance items such as tents, blankets and cash to flood victims in his home district of Jurm and neighboring areas in mid-June. According to the Provincial Council (PC) members, Mojaddedi did not coordinate the distribution with UNAMA, the province's Disaster Response Committee, or with any other local officials. The PC publicly cried foul as sees this lack of coordination as blatant politicking and misuse of government property for campaign puposes. Waqef Hakimi from Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's campaign team discussed his concerns about the incident on Tolo TV's talk show "Election 88." POLoffs have discussed the incident with the Yaseni, Abdullah, and Ghani campaigns and have encouraged them to report it to the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) if they feel it was a serious violation of electoral law.

¶2. PRTOff in Kabul met with Badakhshan Provincial Council member Gulali Akbari, a female incumbent who is running for reelection. Akbari is known as one of the most active PC members and has pushed forward many projects in support of women's employment. She thanked the United States for its continuing support for a large girls' school opening this week in Badakhshan. Of the elections, Akbari noted that the field is competitive, and that 120 candidates for the province's 10 seats are "wealthy." She said she hopes voters in the province, especially women, will recognize the hard work she has done for them. Nevertheless, she was worried that she would not receive a large number of votes simply by virtue of the number of candidates.

Flood Damage May Have Effect On Voting In Takhar

¶3. Lotfollah Azizi, a PC member for Takhar Province, has advised residents in Takhar's northern districts not to vote out of protest unless the Kokcha River Bridge, destroyed by the recent floods, is reconstructed. In what is perhaps the most dramatic example of the recent flood damage in the province, the steel framed Kokcha Bridge was washed out May 5, cutting off approximately 347,000 residents from the provincial capital. Last week, Governor Ibrahim visited Kabul partly to drum up donors for rebuilding the bridge, which may take up to three years to complete. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) blames 17 deaths and 1740 destroyed houses in Takhar Province alone on flooding.

Rallies Begin in Baghlan

¶4. An estimated 1000 supporters of Mirwais Yaseni gathered at a public hall at the textile factory in Pul-i-Khumri on June 22 to

rally support for their candidate. Other public rallies have taken place for President Karzai and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah within the past week. According to political insiders, Dr. Abdullah seems to have the most support in the province, possibly due to Atta's support. Other top runners include Karzai, Yaseni and Ashraf Ghani.

Behind the Scene Politicking Continues in Kunduz

¶5. Elders, local commanders and Governor Omar were all in Kabul this week for a wide range of political and security meetings. Early in the week, Karzai met with prominent local elders to discuss politics and security. This was followed by a meeting of 60 Kunduz commanders called by Minister of Interior Atmar and organized by Deputy Minister of Interior Daoud Daoud, who retains extensive ties to northern commanders. It is still unclear what the ramifications of this high level politicking will be. As such, though presidential political allegiances may be crystallizing, most local political figures have yet to publicly declare their allegiances. One commander told PRTOff that while President Karzai has been working for the Afghan people for the past five years, Dr. Abdullah seems to be working harder.

IEC In Kunduz Meets With Parties and PC Candidates June 24

¶6. Over 90 political party representatives, PC candidates, political figures and local press attended the information session by the Provincial Election Office. Kunduz has 124 PC candidates, including 12 women. Twenty-two candidates are formally aligned to a political party. Although 131 PC candidates had originally registered themselves, four subsequently withdrew their nominations and three failed to qualify due to membership in illegally armed groups. Some PC candidates expressed their concern about overall security in the province. Both the Deputy Governor and the Deputy

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Police Chief addressed these concerns stating that all ANSF were working to ensure security at the polling stations. One PC candidate voiced frustration at the restrictions placed on campaigning at public buildings such as schools and mosques, and demanded public television air time. "If you cannot campaign at schools, mosques or other public places, what are you supposed to do, stop cars at the traffic circle?"

¶7. As previously reported, at least one female PC candidate in Kunduz withdrew her application after local intimidation. Media reported that some PC candidates were afraid to put up posters with their photographs due to deteriorating security in the province. However, public comments at the event indicated that many PC candidates simply cannot afford campaign posters. A few posters of Abdullah Abdullah and President Karzai have begun to appear in Kunduz city.

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